

21st Legislative District Survey 2001



February 2001

Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for again choosing me to serve as your representative in the Washington State House of Representatives. I consider public service an honor and will respect the trust you have placed in me.

One of the best ways I can earn your trust is to listen to your views on issues that are important to our area: transportation, fiscal responsibility, education, the environment and caring about our neighbors. These are front-burner issues this session in Olympia, and I need your help. I hear more than enough from lobbyists and special interests. I need to hear from you, and would appreciate it if you would complete this survey and return it to me. Knowing how you feel on these issues will help me as I make some tough decisions this year.

As always, my assistant JoAnn Chapman and I are here to help you get information or solve a problem with a state agency. I particularly like hearing your ideas for new legislation. Please don't hesitate to call or write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Cooper".

Mike Cooper
State Representative

Olympia office:

Representative Mike Cooper

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Committees:

Transportation (Co-vice chair)
Agriculture & Ecology
(Co-vice chair)
Technology, Telecommunications
& Energy



Town Hall Meeting on Transportation

Saturday, March 3, 2001
10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The Great Room, 3rd floor
Edmonds City Hall
121 - 5th Ave North
Edmonds

Guests: Congressman Jay Inslee and Senator Paull Shin
Call Rep. Cooper's office at (360) 786-7950 if you have questions.

Fixing roads and relieving congestion

My top priority for this legislative session is to address Washington State's long-term transportation needs. We need to tackle our statewide transportation problems not just for the short-term, but for the next several decades, allowing people to spend more time with their families and less time in their cars. Addressing these needs for the 21st District is a pressing need, and our problems will only escalate should Boeing move its Renton operation to our area.

Our goals are to:

- **Reform the transportation funding system-** The process of approving transportation projects must be streamlined, efficiency must be enhanced, and more local control and accountability needs to be incorporated into decision-making.
- **Identify the highest priority road projects-** Our state's most glaring needs must be addressed immediately.
- **Provide transportation choices-** Roads, ferries, buses, rail and transit should all be efficient components of the state's transportation system.

● What do you think about these ideas for transportation reform? Should we:

- Have an independent board to boost accountability and efficiency? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Add fast toll lanes in King and Snohomish Counties? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Have each region keep and spend its own transportation tax dollars? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Raise ferry fares to cover the full cost of the service? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Streamline environmental permits? ☐ Yes ☐ No

● Any transportation plan we develop will require money to implement it. Do you believe the Legislature should **send the financing proposal to the voters for approval in November 2001, or should we pass whatever tax and fee increases are needed and start work immediately?**

- ☐ Vote of the people
- ☐ Legislature should pass it.

● How long is your daily commute (one way)?



Living within our means

Just like your family budget, the state has to stay within its means. But the budget also charts the course for our state: the future of our public schools, the direction of our transportation priorities, the way we care for our vulnerable neighbors, and how many graduates our universities will produce each year.

This year, the budget is especially challenging. Our state faces a budget crunch, with health care costs rising \$1 billion and two education initiatives costing another \$900 million. What's more, this year we will not have windfall revenue sources as we did two years ago, in the form of welfare caseload reduction and the tobacco settlement, to backfill the budget. Governor Locke has proposed a budget that includes \$1.2 billion in cuts. Over the next two months, both the state Senate and House will propose their own versions of our new spending plan before the final compromise emerges.

● Given our current budget situation, what are **your** legislative priorities? (Please rank from 1 to 4, with 1 being most important.)

- _____ Higher education (Enrollment increases, financial aid, training for high-tech jobs)
- _____ Health care (Prescription drug costs, subsidized coverage for the working poor, mental health services)
- _____ Human services (Getting our foster care system accredited, better pay and training for long-term care workers, developmental disabilities, corrections)
- _____ K-12 education (Greater accountability, school safety)

Addressing the energy crisis

Three years ago I led the fight against deregulating Washington's electric utilities. I urged that we wait and see what happened with California's experiment in deregulation. Well, we now all know what happened.

Experts call this winter's energy crisis the "perfect storm" – a combination of serious events hitting from different directions at the same time. We've experienced **rapidly growing demand** fueled by a prosperous economy, growing population and high-tech industries. Wholesale deregulation coupled with low prices resulted in **low investment** in new generation plants. California's **deregulation disaster** required investor-owned utilities to sell off much of their generating capacity and barred them from long-term energy contracts. **Soaring natural gas prices** have affected the costs of gas-fired generators, and the **third-driest winter** on record in the Northwest has impaired water levels for hydro power and fish.

● Preserving the Northwest's legacy of reliable and affordable power is one of our priorities this session. Please answer the following, keeping in mind the state's budget situation.

- Have an independent board to boost accountability and efficiency?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- To assure plentiful electricity at fair prices, we must encourage new generation plants. Do you favor tax breaks on machinery and equipment used in generation facilities?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you favor giving tax incentives to large industries and manufacturers to build their own generating capacity?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you favor reducing environmental standards, such as air quality or stream flow for fish, to increase generating capacity?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you favor tax exemptions to help people conserve energy, such as granting sales-tax exemptions on highly energy-efficient lights and appliances?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Should the state increase the fund to help low-income people pay their utility bills, or is that a function of the private sector?
☐ State ☐ Private ☐ Both

Relieving prescription drug costs

The cost of health care the state provides has risen over \$1 billion. A big part of overall health care cost increases is the cost of new, high-tech prescription drugs. These drugs, while expensive, often help people stay out of the hospital and improve their quality of life and productivity. Drug costs have risen as much as 15 percent in the past year alone.

Many elderly or low-income working folks who have no drug coverage fail to fill prescriptions, or take their pills less frequently than they should to hold down costs. Medicare does not provide prescription coverage, and not all health plans offer it. We are considering options to help reduce the high cost of prescription drugs without harming the state's small pharmacies.

● Do you believe the state should use its purchasing clout to purchase drugs and pass the savings on to consumers?

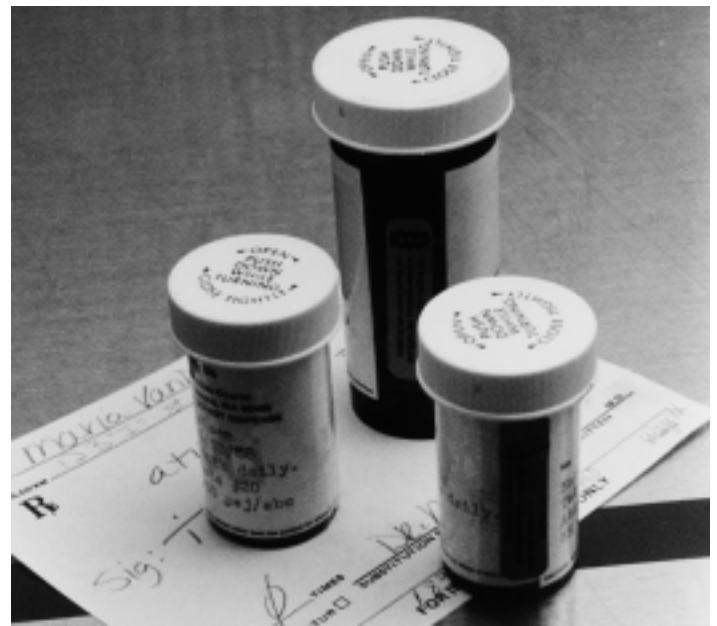
☐ Yes ☐ No

● Should the state:

- _____ help only those in poverty?
- _____ help the working and middle class also?
- _____ stay out of the prescription drug market?

● One way of holding down costs is called disease management – educating people with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, on ways to stay healthy and use appropriate medicines, not necessarily those they see in ads. Do you favor investing in disease management programs for those who receive prescription cost help from the state?

☐ Yes ☐ No





Please
place
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Reducing fire fatalities

In Snohomish County, eight people lost their lives in a boarding home fire that occurred three years ago. Recently, two people died in an Edmonds apartment complex fire. In each instance, there was no built-in sprinkler system. Currently, there are no laws requiring sprinklers in the construction of some new buildings, and countless older apartments, boarding homes and other structures throughout Snohomish County have no automatic fire sprinklers. As a firefighter, I have never responded to an apartment fire involving a fatality where there were sprinklers.

Retrofitting older structures with sprinklers can cost from \$1.50 to \$5.00 per square foot, or roughly a \$1,350 to \$4,500 one-time cost for a typical 2-bedroom unit. Data gathered from other states show that owners get insurance premium reductions ranging from 4 to 40

percent due to sprinkler installation, as well as income-tax breaks on the cost of installation.

- I've proposed legislation that would give apartment and boarding home owners up to seven years to install sprinklers in older buildings. Do you think this is reasonable?

☐ Yes☐ No
- Do you think owners should get tax incentives from the state to install sprinklers?

☐ Yes☐ No
- Sprinklers are not required for new apartment construction with fewer than 16 units or less than three stories. Should the law be changed to require sprinklers in all new construction of five or more units?

☐ Yes☐ No

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